

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4706

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PROP PO

SUBJ: ANTI-CIA PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN

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SUMMARY: IN MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR AND DCM OCTOBER 30 PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES DEPLORED ERRONEOUS GLOOMY PICTURE OF PORTUGAL APPEARING IN WORLD PRESS AND RASH OF ANTI-CIA STORIES APPEARING IN PORTUGUESE PRESS. HE CONSIDERED BOTH PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE SINCE THEY TEND TO DISCREDIT BALANCED, ACCURATE REPORTING ON PORTUGUESE SITUATION CONFIDENT EMBASSY LISBON PROVIDING WASHINGTON. GOP HAS SPOKEN TO JOURNALISTS ALONG THESE LINES AND IS UNDERTAKING INVESTIGATION TO LEARN SOURCE OF ANTI-CIA STORIES. HE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT WORLD (INCLUDING AMERICAN) PRESS IS FULL OF CIA STORIES. GIVEN HIGH DEGREE PORTUGUESE SENSITIVITY TOWARDS ANY POSSIBILITY OF PORTUGAL BEING DEFLECTED FROM PATH TO DEMOCRACY ON WHICH IT FIRMLY PLACED BY APRIL 25 REVOLUTION, IT NATURAL INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION TO CIA WOULD BE REFLECTED IN PORTUGUESE PRESS WHICH, GIVEN NEW PRESS FREEDOM, GOP UNABLE CONTROL. END SUMMARY.

1. IN MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR ARRANGED AT GOP INITIATIVE

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OCTOBER 30, PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES BEGAN WITH A

LENGTHY DESCRIPTION OF TREATMENT PORTUGAL HAS BEEN RECEIVING IN WORLD PRESS, INCLUDING AMERICAN PRESS. ACCORDING TO PRESS, THE SITUATION IN PORTUGAL WAS ONE OF CHAOS, WITH PORTUGAL SLIDING RAPIDLY LEFTWARD TOWARDS COMMUNISM, PREPARING TO LEAVE NATO, AND PLANNING TO CANCEL AMERICAN BASE RIGHTS IN AZORES. NONE OF THIS WAS TRUE. GOP IS FIRMLY FOLLOWING ROAD TO DEMOCRACY AND IS FULLY COMMITTED TO STAYING ON THAT PATH. NATURALLY, WHEN COUNTRY IS EMERGING FROM FIFTY YEARS OF FASCISM, THERE ARE GOING TO BE DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING IT ON TO PATH OF DEMOCRACY, AND PORTUGAL DOES HAVE PROBLEMS, BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN IT IS IN A STATE OF CHAOS OR GOING TOWARDS COMMUNISM. AS FAR AS NATO IS CONCERNED, GOP IS ABSOLUTELY SINCERE WHEN IT SAYS IT WILL SCRUPULOUSLY HONOR ITS INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS. AS FOR LAJES, GOP IS SINCERE IN ITS DESIRE TO NEGOTIATE AN AGREEMENT AND IS EXTREMELY ANXIOUS TO SECURE AMERICAN AID. REPORTS TO THE CONTRARY WERE SIMPLY NOT TRUE. UNFORTUNATELY, MANY OF THESE UNTRUE ALLEGATIONS ABOUT PORTUGAL ARE CARRIED NOT ONLY IN THE WORLD PRESS, BUT EVEN SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER HAS EXPRESSED BOTH PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH THE SITUATION IN PORTUGAL.

2. PM SAID THAT APPEARANCE OF ARTICLES AGAINST THE CIA IN THE PORTUGUESE PRESS COMPLICATED MATTERS. HE WAS FULLY CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT SUCH A SERIES OF STORIES ABOUT CIA TENDED TO GIVE AN UNFORTUNATE IMPRESSION ABOUT PORTUGAL'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE WORLD. HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT THESE ARTICLES IN PORTUGUESE PRESS WERE REFLECTIONS IN PORTUGAL OF WHAT IS BEING SAID IN WORLD PRESS, AND INDEED IN THE AMERICAN PRESS. HE NOTED THAT ONE OF THE RECENT OFFENSIVE ARTICLES, THAT IN VIDA MUNDIAL, CONSISTED LARGELY OF QUOTATIONS FROM A FRENCH MAGAZINE ARTICLE. HE REFERRED ALSO TO WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE HE HAD READ THE DAY BEFORE. HE SAID THAT THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE WERE VERY PLEASED AT THE REVOLUTION OF THE 25TH OF APRIL AND VERY ANXIOUS TO HAVE IT SUCCEED IN ITS GOAL OF PLACING PORTUGAL ON THE PATH OF DEMOCRACY. THE PEOPLE ARE THEREFORE TERRIBLY SENSITIVE TO ANYTHING THAT SEEMS TO THEM AS POSSIBLY THREATENING THE GOALS OF THE REVOLUTION. IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE NOT TO BE HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS WHEN SUCH THINGS OCCURRED

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AS THE APPEARANCE IN SETUBAL, THEN LISBON, THEN MADEIRA, OF THE YACHT APOLLO. INDEED, THE GOP, ON APRIL 26, HAVING BECOME CONSCIOUS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE YACHT APOLLO, PLACED IT UNDER VERY CLOSE OBSERVATION AND AFTER A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF OBSERVATION WERE STILL PERPLEXED ABOUT IT BUT WERE CONFIDENT THAT IT DID NOT REPRESENT ANY SUBVERSIVE POLITICAL INSTRUMENT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED AS WELL THAT THE CIA WAS PRESUMABLY A GREAT DEAL MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN

TO USE SUCH A MECHANISM AS THE YACHT APOLLO TO MOUNT OPERATIONS. BUT IT WAS NONETHELESS DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE THAT A THING LIKE THE YACHT APOLLO WAS NOT A REFLECTION OF THE CIA-TYPE ACTIVITIES. THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE HEAR ABOUT CHILE DAILY AND IT MAKES THEM VERY APPREHENSIVE. IT WAS NOT THE PORTUGUESE BUT RATHER THE AMERICAN PRESS IN WHICH STORIES ORIGINATED INDICATING THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD SOME ROLE TO PLAY IN THE ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE ALLENDE GOVERNMENT IN CHILE. AND IT IS THEREFORE NOT UNNATURAL THAT THESE APPREHENSIONS ABOUT CIA SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN PORTUGUESE PRESS.

3. PM THEN SAID THAT THE GOP WAS FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT AMEMBASSY LISBON WAS REPORTING DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL WITH COMPLETE OBJECTIVITY. HE SAID THAT THE EMBASSY HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN CORRECTING FALSE IMPRESSIONS ABOUT PORTUGAL, AND HE WAS CERTAIN THAT THE EMBASSY WAS PLAYING THIS ROLE TO THE BEST OF ITS ABILITY. HE WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT SUCH FREQUENT ARTICLES ABOUT CIA IN LOCAL PRESS PREJUDICED THE EFFORTS OF THE EMBASSY TO GIVE A BALANCED PICTURE OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN PORTUGAL TODAY. WITH THIS IN MIND, THE GOP HAD CALLED IN JOURNALISTS LAST SATURDAY AND POINTED OUT TO THEM THAT THE GOP WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN LISBON WAS PRESENTING TO WASHINGTON A BALANCED PICTURE OF THE SITUATION IN PORTUGAL BUT THAT A HEAVY PORTUGUESE PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST CIA AND ANYTHING ELSE ANTI-AMERICAN MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR THE EMBASSY'S BALANCED REPORTING TO BE HEARD IN WASHINGTON. HE DID NOT KNOW THE PRECISE WORDS THAT WERE USED BY THE GOP SPOKESMAN TO THE PRESS, BUT HE KNEW THAT THE GOP INTENT IN CALLING THE JOURNALISTS WAS TO TRY TO PERSUADE THEM THAT PORTUGAL HAD AN ALLY IN THE AMERICAN EMBASSY -- NOT THAT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WAS IN ANY WAY PREJUDICED IN FAVOR OF PORTUGAL BUT THAT IT WAS ACTING AS CONFIDENTIAL

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AN UNBIASED OBSERVER OF THE SCENE -- AND THAT IF THEIR TASK BECOMES OVERLY COMPLICATED BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENS IN THE PORTUGUESE PRESS, THE RESULT COULD EVEN BE THE RECALL OF THOSE IN THE EMBASSY WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS OBJECTIVE REPORTING. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE GOP HAD AN INVESTIGATION UNDERWAY TO DISCOVER THE SOURCE OF ANTI-CIA ARTICLES IN THE PORTUGUESE PRESS. BUT, HE ADDED, WHAT MORE CAN WE DO: NOW THAT PORTUGAL IS A FREE SOCIETY, THE GOP CAN NO LONGER CONTROL THE PRESS.

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